(b) An amount of Rs. 388.98 lakh has been sanctioned during the year 2006-07 in the first phase for the Development of Tea Tourism Circuit in North Bengal under scheme for Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits. The sanctioned project includes internal pathways, car parking, paved area, landscaping, water supply system, water purification system, waste disposal system, lighting and illumination system, boundary wall and signages etc. at identified tea gardens.

(c) Does not arise.

Maintenance of Raja seat, a historical site in Mercera (Coorg)

838. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the existence of Raja Seat, a historical site in Mercera town in Karnataka;

(b) whether State Government is releasing only Rs. 5000 per year for its maintenance of an area spread over 18.55 acres;

(c) whether an extent of 1.10 acre has been encroached by the 32 families to build houses;

(d) if so, whether Government are interested in removing the unauthorized encroachers from the Raja Seat; and

(e) whether there is any proposal with Government to improve it as a tourist spot as it is the district from where Field Marshall K.M. Cariyappa, and Gen. Thimmaiah hailed?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Removal of encroachment does not fall under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Tourism. Maintenance and upkeep of places of tourist interest is primarily the responsibility of the State Government concerned.

(e) A project proposal for destination development of Coorg in Karnataka has been sanctioned on 13.11.2003 with a total cost of Rs. 483.07 lakh. It also included the following components:

(1) Landscaping, public conveniences, children park at Raja Seat, Madikeri

(2) Restoration, landscaping and illumination of Fort and Palace area at Madikeri

(3) Landscaping and illumination of Raja's Tomb at Madikeri

The executing agency for the project is M/s Jungle Lodges & Resorts, Bangalore in consultation with Archaeological Survey of India. Execution, maintenance and upkeep of assets created with Central financial assistance is the responsibility of the State Government of Karnataka.

Tourism potential in Orissa

839. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether considering the vast potential of tourism in Orissa, the State Government propose to provide a boost to rural tourism and development of physical infrastructure at major tourist spots in the State;

(b) whether the cash-strapped State have sought Central assistance in the matter; and

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the action plan of the Centre to render help to this backward State in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Development and promotion of tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/UT Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations for tourism related projects including Rural Tourism Projects which are identified in consultation and interaction with them under schemes for Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits, Product/Infrastructure Development of Destinations and Assistance to Large Revenue Generating Projects. Project proposals that are complete in all respect are approved on the basis of *inter-se* priority and funds released subject to availability under respective head.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A statement showing details of projects sanctioned during the last three years for the State of Orissa is enclosed (*See* below).